A

LETTER

FROM A

DISSENTER

To his Friend of the ſame

PERSWASION.

Being a Perſwaſive to a COALITION for the better Eſtabliſhment,

OF THE

Protestant Religion

IN

ENGLAND.

Licenſed and Entred according to Act of Parliament.

LONDON,
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SIR,

AFter the long ſevere Storm which has been raiſed againſt the Reform'd Religion, methinks all True Lovers of the ſame, ſhould Unite their Pious Endeavours to procure that Happy Calm, which at this Conjuncture we need not deſpair to enjoy.

Now among the means, probably conducing to this End, You may ſafely reckon the Disbanding all the Piques and Prejudices, and the Burial of ſuch Deſign, as have hitherto hinder'd our Tranquility, by hindering our Coalition, or being made one Body with the Church of *England*. A thing which every good Proteſtant ought to promote, and to which he is not only invited by the Dangers to which our Separation doth unavoidably ex-

pose us, but by the great Hopes of that Christian Coalition which the Juncture affords.

And unless Prejudice, that unlucky impediment of informing our selves aright, be still a Vail upon our Minds, we cannot but see the many happy steps made already towards a desireable Coalition.

For first, You well know Sir, that the great pretences of our Non-Conformity, and Separation from the Church of *England*, are taken out of the way. And that we have no longer any Reason to make use of that popular Topic, I mean the Popishness of her Clergy and Offices.

As to her Clergy, their Behaviour and Conduct in these Times of Difficulty and Tryal, have sufficiently clear'd them from the imputation of Popishness, or being popishly affected. For rather than they would betray the least inclination to that which is properly to be call'd Popery, or give the least advantage to the same, They have chosen to venture the loss of their Liberty and Livelihood; and what they account more Dear, even the loss of their Princes Favour. And if any have Warp'd, or Shrunk in this Tryal, they are such as went out from *us*, and were never rightly of *them*. And as it would be highly Unjust, so it would be altogether Unkind, any more to lay Popery to their Charge, who have by so many Christian Methods, appear'd against it. So that this Old stumbling block of Popishness in the Clergy of the Church of *England*, being taken out of the Way, there is in my Judgment, removed one of the greatest hinderances of our Coalition.

And e're I leave this Intimation; permit me to put you in mind, to whom we are indebted for those Excellent Confutations of Popery, the four last years have produced

produced. I am ſure your Pen and mine have lain Fallow, and of thoſe many of our Party, who heretofore have ſpoke and Writ ſo much againſt the Whore of *Babylon*, not one has at this needful ſeaſon, dropt a Line, or utter'd a Word in publick againſt Her. But the Diſcoveries and Confutations of the Errours, Superſtitions, Idolatries, and Tyrannies of the Church of *Rome*, are all to be aſcrib'd to the Genuine Sons of the Church of *England*. And let me add, that they have ſo well managed the Cauſe, that I wonder any thinking Perſons of the Church of *Rome*, can any longer tarry in her Communion, if they have impartially read and conſider'd what has of late been writ againſt it.

The next thing which we have long Objected againſt our Conforming to the Church of *England*, is the Popiſhneſs of her Offices; from which heavy Charge nothing can either more compendiouſly, or more plainly acquit her, than our comparing the Offices uſed in our Churches, with thoſe that are uſed in Maſs-Houſes. For ſince the Popiſh Prieſts have been ſo unwary as to ſhew their Religion, thoſe of our Party, who have yielded ſo far to Curioſity, as to go to ſee it, cannot but abundantly ſatisfie themſelves, that the Offices uſed in our Churches are as different from thoſe uſed in the Maſs-Houſes, as a decent and Edifying Solemnity is from an inſipid and Gaudy Pageantry.

But if all this move you not to a Coalition, but that you are ſtill reſtif upon the Account of ſome Things required from you, as Terms of Communion, and which you cannot ſo well digeſt: Then let me put you in mind of the Advances the Biſhops of the Church of *England* have made towards an happy adjuſtment of this Objection. The

The Bishops you know, have been the only Order of Men in the Land, of whose Lordly stiffness we have been most afraid. And yet I appeal to your own Judicious Observation, if ever Men appear'd better Champions for the Protestant Religion, or expressed a more Christian Temper toward Protestant Dissenters.

I will remember you but of three Instances, and to leave you to your own Lengths.

The first instance is that of the Bishops Petition to the King, in which they promise a tenderness to Dissenters, and a readiness to exercise the same, when these are requisite circumstances to make it of moment and significancy to them.

Another Instance, of the Bishops tender Regard to Protestant Dissenters, is to be seen in the two Articles Recommended by the Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury* to the Bishops within his Metropolitan Jurisdiction, and by them recommended to their Diocesan Clergy. I will set them down in their own Apostolical stile.

That they *viz.* The Clergy walk in Wisdom towards those that are not of our Communion: And if there be in any of their Parishes any such, that they neglect not frequently to Confer with them in the Spirit of Meekness. Seeking by all good Ways and Means, to Gain and Win them over to our Communion; more especially that they have a very tender regard to our Brethren the Protestant Dissenters; that upon Occasion offer'd they Visit them at their Houses, and receive them kindly at their own, and Treat them fairly wherever they meet them, discoursing Calmly and Civilly with them, perswading them (if it may be) to a full Complyance with Our Church; or at least, that, whereto we have already

already attain'd, we may all walk by the same Rule, and mind the same Thing. And in order hereunto that they take all Opportunities of assureing and convincing them, That the Bishops of this Church are Realy and Sincerely irreconcileable Enemies to the Errors & Superstitions, Idolatries and Tyrannies of the Church of *Rome*; and that the very Unkind Jealousies which some have had of Us to the contrary were altogether groundless.

And in the last place that they warmly and most Affectionately Exhort them, to joyn with us, in dayly fervent Prayer to the God of Peace, for an Universal Blessed Vnion of all Reformed Churches, both at home and abroad, against our Common Enemies, and that all they that do confess the Holy Name of our dear Lord, and do agree in the Truth of His Holy Word may also meet in one Holy Communion, and live in perfect Unity and Godly Love,

The last Instance I shall mention of the Fatherly Reguard the Bishops bear towards Protestant-Dissenters, is to be met with in their tenth Proposal to the King, where They Christianly insinuate their Desire, that a due Liberty of Conscience may be Established by a fair and Free Parliament, and that all Grievances may be Redress'd and matters in Church and State settl'd upon just and solid Foundations. Which is the sum of all You and I can hope or wish for.

These things I hope, Sir, You will maturely consider and not grumble to make some Advances toward them, who have made so many towards You. I am heartily perswaded the Bishops are Real, and will not faulter in one tittle they have said. And if we are not wanting

to

to our ſelves, I doubt not, but that both You and I, and all Proteſtant Diſſenters, ſhall reap the Benefit of their Pious Endeavours. And that they will be better than their word when they have the happy ſeaſon for ſo doing.

And as Things now ſtand nothing can hinder our Coalition with the Church of *England*, but either our own ill Temper, or the Craftineſs of our Enemies: What I now Write is deſigned to Correct the former; and if I obtain, the latter is at an End. For if all the Proteſtants in this Nation Embrace the Advantages [the Juncture ſeems to promiſe] of Uniting in one Communion, We may bid defiance to Devil and Jeſuit, to Hell and *Rome*.

SIR,

Jan. 5. 1688.

Your

Faithful Friend

N. N.

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